

## **James A. Bailey Home Information Site**

Formerly located at the current site of Cobo Arena, Washington Blvd.

Local		
State	✓	1/19/78
State Marker	✓	8/7/78
National		



James A. Bailey<sup>1</sup>



### **Historic Overview:**

James A. McGinnis who later adopted the name Bailey was born in Detroit in 1847. Bailey co-founded Barnum and Bailey's Greatest Show on Earth. He rose through the ranks in several circuses developing a talent for advertising and management before joining forces with P. T. Barnum. In 1881, Bailey merged with Barnum to create a show with acrobats, animals, band music, clowns, trapeze artists and sideshow features such as human and animal curiosities, alive and dead, real and bogus. After Barnum's death, Bailey continued to run the show with tours to Europe and throughout America on railroad cars displaying his show in five rings under a huge tent.

Upon Bailey's death in 1907, Ringling Brothers, a major competitor of Barnum & Bailey, bought the Barnum and Bailey Circus for \$400,000. The circuses were combined in 1919 to become the Ringling Brothers, & Barnum & Bailey, Greatest Show on Earth<sup>2</sup>. The circus is still in existence today

<sup>1</sup> Picture courtesy of [www.mccaddon.net/co/jabaff.htm](http://www.mccaddon.net/co/jabaff.htm)

<sup>2</sup> Information obtained from the Gale Encyclopedia of Popular Culture

